

Mr. Secretary, on behalf of the wheat growers of this state, I welcome you and thank you for attending this 2007 Farm Bill forum in this great state of Washington. Agriculture is still the number one industry in this state and with a properly designed farm bill, it could remain number one for many years to come. Agriculture is currently facing some pretty tough times with the enormous increase in our expenses due to the sharp increases in fuel and fertilizer prices. It is our hope that we can get some immediate relief to help us survive as farm operators so that we may participate in the programs that will make up the 2007 farm bill. Today I will provide input on the 2007 Farm Bill, but keep in mind that we must address the current crisis as well.

As I look at the six questions asked of U.S. farmers by the USDA to help shape the 2007 Farm Bill, I find that the same answer will take care of the most of the questions. My general answer to you on all these questions is to keep the American farmer strong and new farmers and next generation farmers will have a future in production agriculture, rural communities that are dwindling will strengthen once again, farmers will be able to purchase the equipment needed to farm with more conservation in mind, and we'll be able to be more competitive on the world market.

Today, the US farmer is the highest regulated agriculture producer in the world. Over the years despite high regulations and being exploited globally as a pawn in foreign policy we have been a world leader in efficient food production.

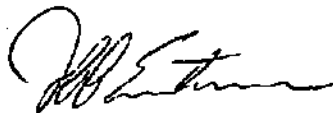
In a two minute testimony, I can not even begin to get into the details that we'd like to see in a 2007 Farm Bill. I will submit more testimony addressing these details after today.

As for now, I just want you to leave you with the understanding that the policy set in the next farm bill will greatly affect many people. In this state you will be affecting family farms that go back four, five, and six generation. Real people, who know the land and have a love and admiration for agriculture of great magnitude.

I hear of how the next farm bill will have to be WTO compliant. Keep in mind that the WTO doesn't represent fair trade, though it is supposed to be a move towards free trade. Don't sell out the American farmer in order to be WTO compliant. Our producers are stewards of their land and give great consideration to our environment, human rights, human safety, and national security, while producers in some of our competing countries don't.

Most importantly, please work with the American farmer and the different commodity organizations as congress drafts the next farm bill. Thank you for your concern today.

Sincerely,



Jeff Emtman, President
Washington Association of Wheat Growers.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE
SECRETARIAT, USDA

2005 NOV 10 P 02:17